

Assemblyman
PAUL KORETZ
Forty-second Assembly District



proudly representing the communities of West Hollywood, Beverly Hills, Los Angeles, Century City, Westwood, Bel Air, Brentwood, West Los Angeles, Hollywood, Hancock Park, Universal City, Studio City, and Sherman Oaks

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California Releases Physician Guidelines HIV Post-Exposure Prophylaxis
State Guidelines Are Better Than CDC's for Docs Making Snap Decisions
Key Differences with CDC Regarding Treatment Recommendations

(Sacramento) - Assemblyman Paul Koretz (D-West Hollywood) today announced the release by the California Department of Health Services of new physician recommendations for the use of antiretroviral drugs to help prevent HIV infection following sexual exposures and injection drug use. The treatment called Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) requires immediate decisions by doctors who must initiate a four week regime of antiretroviral drugs within 72 hours after a possible HIV exposure. The California recommendations follow the publication of similar guidelines by the federal Centers for Disease Control (CDC) last week that many HIV advocates believe were delayed for years by Bush political appointees.

"I authored AB 879 in 2003 requiring guidelines specifically because of CDC foot-dragging on vital PEP treatment information for doctors," said Assemblyman Koretz.

With both state and federal guidelines available, physicians now have two knowledgeable perspectives on PEP treatment. However, the California guidelines include a six-page executive summary that may prove more useful to doctors who must make snap decisions for PEP to be effective. The state recommendations also lean toward using two antiretroviral drugs while the CDC prefers treating with three.

Dr. Michelle Roland is a leading PEP researcher with the Positive Health Program at the University of California San Francisco and San Francisco General Hospital and is Co-Chair of the California Task Force on Non-Occupational PEP which drafted the state recommendations.

"The California recommendations provide a nice complement and balance to the CDC guidelines. Not only are they extremely user-friendly, they offer a slightly different perspective on some key issues like how many medications to use, how many blood tests are needed, and how to think about who is at greatest risk. Critically, however, both guidelines stress the need for risk reduction counseling and referrals to help people stay HIV negative not only as a result of this exposure, but over the long-haul. This is the real opportunity that PEP provides," said Dr. Roland.

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Walt Senterfit, Co-Chair of the Southern California HIV/AIDS Advocacy Coalition (SCHAC), a group of AIDS service providers that sponsored the Koretz legislation in 2003 concurred with Dr. Roland on the role PEP can play in changing risk-taking behaviors.

"The stress of a possible HIV exposure combined with a month of antiretroviral drugs provides a powerful backdrop for HIV prevention counseling and presents a valuable opportunity to change behaviors and save lives," said Senterfit.

The state recommendations for health care providers are available from the State Office of AIDS website at www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/ooa/Resources/pdf/pepguidelinesfinal.pdf.

The CDC guidelines can be viewed in the January 21 issue of the CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report at www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/rr/rr5402.pdf.

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